

may take. But this I promise: I will stand up for American interests and the interests of a cleaner environment. And if the United States has to be the only nation to stand against the biodiversity treaty as now drawn, so be it.

I believe deeply in protecting our com-

mon environment, and I will proudly present in Rio the U.S. record that is second to none anywhere in the world.

*Note: The President spoke at 7:50 a.m. at Andrews Air Force Base in Camp Springs, MD.*

## Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by President Guillermo Endara in Panama City, Panama

*June 11, 1992*

*The President.* Mr. President and Mr. Vice President and members of the Cabinet, Barbara and I are just delighted to be with you to witness firsthand the great progress that Panama has made since its liberation from that dictatorship and tyranny back in December 1989. Panama is once again free, democracy restored, and the rule of law prevails.

With your nation's return to democracy, Panama resumes its place in the world community. This country's path toward economic reform and also liberalization has rekindled economic enterprise. And maybe some don't realize it, but last year your nation's economic growth was the highest in the whole hemisphere. I salute your success and your efforts, which bring the prospect of a better future for all Panamanians.

Our countries have enjoyed a unique partnership since Panama gained its independence nearly 90 years ago. That partnership is embodied today in the 1977 Panama Canal treaties. Mr. President, let me just assure you the United States keeps its word: Those treaties will be fully implemented on schedule.

But what I really wanted to do to come

here was to salute those of you in this room who stood up to the tyranny of Noriega and who dared to oppose him in the 1989 elections and who now have the responsibility for strengthening your democracy for future generations.

As we were riding in in the car I sensed a little nervousness on the part of my friend President Endara. I think he was worried that I might be offended by some show of protest. But what I saw and felt was that overwhelming welcome from the people along the streets. It expressed, I think, a genuine friendship between Panama and the United States. And for the tiny, tiny handful of people that are protesting, I said they ought to go up to San Francisco and get an idea what a real protest is like. *[Laughter]*

So we've been here, and we are very grateful to you. We salute you. And I would like to just propose a toast to the health of President and Mrs. Endara and to that lasting, strengthening friendship between Panama and the United States of America.

*Note: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. at the Presidential Palace.*

## Remarks to the American Community in Panama City

*June 11, 1992*

Thank you so very, very much for that warm welcome. And General Joulwan, thank you for the introduction. And may I salute

not only the general but also Ambassador Hinton, our distinguished Ambassador. He and Mrs. Hinton, Mrs. Joulwan, and

you and the Embassy staff, Mr. Ambassador, are doing a first-rate job here in Panama. And I salute you for your work, your career, and your dedication in representing the United States of America.

I want to greet the graduates, seniors at Balboa and Cristobal High who are graduating today. Let me say hello to the Panama Canal Commission members, the Smithsonian Institute office people that are here. And to all of you serving the cause of freedom across the continents and oceans, my thanks for your service to our great country and for your dedication to the United States of America. And may God bless you all.

Now I want to say a few words to the Americans here, but before I do that, I want to say a word to the citizens of Panama. My Spanish isn't very good, so I'm going to ask for a little translation. But I first want to thank President Endara, Vice President Ford, Mayor Correa for the warm welcome they gave to us from the minute we arrived. I am grateful to each and every one of them.

May I say to the people of Panama, Barbara and I will never forget the warm welcome you gave us as we drove in from the airport and indeed as we drove to this base, thousands of people along the road expressing their appreciation for our great country. And let me say to them, we appreciate Panama. We appreciate Panama's move to democracy, and no tiny little left-wing demonstration is going to set your democracy back.

May I say in conclusion to the people in Panama, democracy takes a while to solidify it, to perfect it. Democracy doesn't come easy. But I could sense in that crowd today and amongst the leaders today the determination to perfect and see Panama's democracy come to total fulfillment. And let me say to the people of Panama, Barbara and I are grateful for the welcome. The day of the dictator is over, and you should take great pride in what your country has done.

All right, now, to all you Yankees out here—[applause]. In fact, I think I'll go to work here; it's hot out there. But a special hello to those from this base, from other bases here in Panama. I know that some of you came a long, long way, an hour-and-

a-half drive across the Isthmus to come and give us this tremendous welcome. And let me salute the seven from the Pacific side, Quarry Heights, Fort Clayton, Fort Kobbe, Howard, Albrook, Panama Canal-Rodman Naval Air Station, and Port Amador, and then the three on the Atlantic side, Fort Davis, Fort Sherman, and Galeta Island.

Working abroad, and Barbara and I have been there, is a learning experience in a way, managing diplomatic and domestic responsibilities. I just want you to know that we have tremendous respect, whether it's in the military, whether it's as civilians, for all who serve their country overseas. Your work, whether it was on the civilian side or on the military side, has helped give this wonderful country a chance for what we take for granted in the United States, that democratic experience and freedom. That's what your mission is about.

I know that a lot goes into planning a Presidential visit. I was on the receiving end of one of them over in China, and I thought I would never recover. But to all of those who worked with the arrangements on this visit, let me simply say we will do what we said: We will leave on schedule. And you can get back to normal.

But before I do, before I leave and before Barbara leaves, let me just say that you all should take pride in knowing that you serve at a time when Panama is reaching an entirely new status in the community of nations. Those of you who took part in Just Cause and those of you who have come since must take great satisfaction in Panama's accomplishments. Don't let this little ripple out there today that took place in the plaza, a handful of people trying to disrupt this wonderful welcome, don't let it discourage you. I'd say the same to the people. You can feel the heartbeat here, and you are partly responsible for that wonderful feeling between Panama and the United States of America.

Justice and freedom have been restored. With each sunrise the people of Panama wake to liberty's greatest gift: free elections, free press, and free worship. I must say that the plaza where we came from, there's a history there of protest and also vigil. But today that plaza is the people's park. And I wish every one of you could have seen the

welcome we had before a handful of characters tried to disrupt it all. Each day you serve, you are visible reminders that freedom and democracy work. You're laying a foundation for cooperation between our nations that will last for generations to come.

As I know, as we saw tragically just yesterday, there are times when some of your comrades are called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. I want you to know as Commander in Chief that we honor the memory of Corporal Hernandez here today, a veteran of Desert Storm, and the memories of all the proud, brave men and women in uniform who gave their all in the service of their country. The most fitting tribute to their memory and to their sacrifice is to complete the work they began. And therefore, we will continue to help the Panamanians build on their progress in strengthening democracy and developing their economic system so that future generations can share what you all have helped start, this new beginning.

We're going to work together to secure a future of free trade, a link to economic recovery, progress, and prosperity. Our countries are going to work together to bring an end to that dreadful narcotic trafficking that are poisoning the kids in Pan-

ama and poisoning the kids in the United States. We will not fail in crushing the narco-traffickers.

And so to each and every one of you, our profound thanks for your service. Once again, to President Endara and his colleagues, my sincere thanks for the warmth of the welcome and, much more important, for what Panama is doing as now a newly found proud member of the family of nations, moving down the path to democracy and freedom. It is a wonderful example.

Now we head off to the Environmental Conference down there in Rio. And I look forward to that because we're taking down there a sound, forward-looking message on the measure of the environment. And I believe that we're going to go just fine.

But thank you all for the service to the greatest, freest country on the face of the Earth, the United States of America. Thank you very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. at Albrook Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. George Joulwan, commander in chief, Southern Command, and U.S. Army Cpl. Zak A. Hernandez, who was killed June 10 by gunmen in Panama.*

## Statement on the Balanced Budget Amendment *June 11, 1992*

Today's vote in the House shows that we are close to realizing a goal that the overwhelming majority of Americans support, adoption of a balanced budget constitutional amendment. The Democratic leadership's proposal was soundly defeated, and our bipartisan amendment came within just nine votes of getting the two-thirds needed to pass.

A balanced budget amendment is absolutely essential to the economic health of America. We cannot continue to burden our children and grandchildren with crippling Federal deficits.

I thank the 280 Members of the House, Republican and Democrat, who stood up to the special interests and voted for America's future. To the 153 Members who voted against balancing the Federal budget, I say this: The will of the American people could not be clearer. We must adopt a balanced budget amendment.

We are within striking distance of winning this fight. I will be discussing with key bipartisan supporters bringing the balanced budget amendment up again as soon as possible and finding those few extra votes needed to pass it.